

Better Homes and Centers



Michigan Department of
Social Services

Caring for the Caregiver

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CAREER LADDERS? POWER SUITS? WHAT MAKES US PROFESSIONAL?

Patricia F. Hearron

Licensing Consultant, Saginaw County

What image does the word "professional," conjure up for you? Do you see someone dressed in a power suit and classic pumps, carrying a leather briefcase and dashing off for the next high-powered meeting? Does a day care provider, looking a little frazzled after a day of wiping up spills and settling toddlers' disputes, fit into your picture of "professional"? What distinguishes the professional from the non-professional? Salary? Status? Training and education?

These questions have a special relevance in the field of child care, where many workers have received their training "on the job," and where not even those with advanced degrees or certificates are accorded the status or salaries bestowed on their counterparts in other fields. For those of us in child care, professionalism involves not only the possession of specialized knowledge and skills, but also a commitment—to providing quality care; to furthering one's knowledge and skills; and to gaining the recognition and respect of the communities we serve.

The National Institute for Early Childhood Professional Development has been pondering these issues since its inception in 1991, with a goal of improving programs for children by improving the quality and consistency of professional development for those people who work in those programs. It is a complex issue for many reasons. On the one hand, for example, the early childhood field has traditionally been open and accessible to people with widely varying backgrounds; on the other hand, however, this democratic quality has sometimes left the field open to the misperception that "anyone can do it, with or without training." Parents in one study expressed the disturbing belief that more training of caregivers will make child care settings more like cold, uncaring institutions.

DIRECTOR'S CORNER

The Division of Child Day Care Licensing was pleased to receive a Crystal PACE Award from the Public Relations Society of America, Central Michigan Chapter, for their outstanding work on the Child Day Care Licensing video series produced in conjunction with the Department's Office of Communications, LTS Productions and Rossman, Martin & Associates.

The Division was also thrilled to win the Special Achievement Child Care Recognition Award from Kent Regional 4-C. The award was given for the Division's leadership role in advancing the quality of care of children through its production of the series and the staff's dedication to educating adults about the care of children.

"They provided a masterful presentation of critical information for both parents and providers in an entertaining and clear format," said Deb VanderMolen of Steelcase Child Care Services who nominated the Division for the Kent 4-C Award. "Their leadership in the area of education is to be commended."

The project took over a year to complete and features eight videos, a slide presentation, and eight accompanying discussion guides. The videos and written materials show the specifics of creating and managing a developmentally appropriate and safe child care facility, as well as the importance of forming partnerships between parents, the state and providers to improve the care given to Michigan's children. Topics include: General Licensing Rules, How to Start a Center, Fire Safety and Sanitation, Infant and Toddler Provisions, Positive Discipline Methods, Positive Discipline Environment, Transportation, Field Trips and Special Provisions for School-Age Children, and Complaints and Concerns.

These materials are designed to be used by child care center directors and staff members, day care home providers, and by individuals working to improve caregiving skills. Persons considering becoming licensed or involved in the DSS licensing complaint process may also find them useful.

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The fact is, however, that there are indisputable advantages—for children and their caregivers—in the growing professionalism of the early childhood field. Children benefit because caregivers do a better job when they have access to solid knowledge about child development and early education. They benefit when caregivers are “plugged in” to new developments in the field that allow them to deal with complex issues like inclusion of children with disabilities or sensitivity to cultural differences. And, children benefit when they can count on all the people who care for them to share a common body of knowledge, regardless of whether they are in settings that are called school, day care, or by some other name.

Those of us who work with children will benefit when we can set aside our differences in title or status and work toward common goals—not the least of which might be a greater public appreciation of the special skills and knowledge we possess and more adequate compensation for those skills and knowledge.

Regardless of whether your training came before or after you started caring for children, whether it came from college courses or on-the-job experience, you can share in the benefits described by increasing your own level of professionalism in several ways:

1. Join a professional organization, such as the National Association for the Education of Young Children. This will provide you with a steady incoming supply of important new information as well as a network of colleagues who share your concerns and goals.
2. Tap into opportunities to further your training. Contact your local 4-C organization, community college or university to find out about classes and workshops that are available.
3. Attend conferences on child care and early education as a way to gain new information as well as expand your professional network.
4. Move on to higher levels of involvement with professional organizations. Serve as an officer or committee chair; volunteer to present a workshop.
5. Find a mentor who can help you to clarify your professional goals and chart a course for achieving them.
6. If you've never taken a college class, find out about the Child Development Associate (CDA) credential and consider working toward it. If you have a CDA, consider going on for your Associate's or Bachelor's degree.

7. Instead of thinking of career “ladders,” think of career “lattices.” Recognize that moving across and between segments of the early childhood profession can be valid forms of professional development.

Don't fall for the outmoded model of career progression which suggests that the less actual contact with children you have, the more successful you are. If you continually seek new information and devote your energy to providing the best possible care for children, you are a professional, whether you wear a power suit or jeans that have been slightly spattered with fingerpaint.



Director's Corner

(continued from page 1)

The Division's public education committee included Peter Barnes, Communication Specialist; Licensing Division staff Donna Bousson, Bruce Brown, Carole Grates, Margaret Quigley, Stanley Roth, Lynn Smith, Ann Weinstein, and Jackie Wood.

Trudie Wolf

THE MICHIGAN CHILD CARE FUTURES PROJECT: IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF CHILD CARE IN MICHIGAN

Margaret Crawley, Program Specialist

*Michigan 4C Association
and*

*Jacquelyn Kelley, Student Intern
Michigan State University*

In 1990, Michigan 4C Association received a grant from the Ford Foundation to establish the Michigan Child Care Futures Project, a public/private partnership designed to increase the supply of quality child care for children and families in communities.

Michigan Community Coordinated Child Care (4C) Association administers the Michigan Child Care Futures Project and contracts with each of the fourteen local/regional 4C agencies in Michigan to provide services at the community level. Local businesses and foundations contribute additional funds enabling the local/regional 4C agencies to expand local services.

The Michigan Child Care Futures Project promotes a system that helps providers develop quality child care settings. Services offered in communities include:

1. **Targeted Recruitment of Child Care Providers.** Local/regional 4C agencies respond to child care needs by parents and by employers and recruit new and existing providers to meet these needs. For example, most communities need infant/toddler care and care for children with special needs. Many employers need child care providers who work evenings and weekends to match the child care needs of their work place.
2. **Comprehensive Training for Providers.** The training promotes the importance of professionalism and encourages providers to join professional organizations and to seek further education.
3. **Support Services.** These services include help with completing the (CDA) credential, the National Association for Family Child Care accreditation, as well as access to further studies and professional organizations.

Research provides ample evidence linking the training of child care providers to the quality of care that children receive. It found that providers in child care centers and family child care homes with more child-related training are more responsive to children and show more comforting behavior. Training is also associated with more child-centered teaching, helping, dramatic play and activities that involve interactions with children. These providers learn about child care and child development and are involved professionally with other child care providers.

The purpose of this article is to acquaint providers with the Michigan Child Care Futures training offered at three levels—basic, advanced and training for admin-

istrators. The **basic training** is offered in a 15 hour series. Training content relates to the competency areas defined by the CDA—health and safety, nutrition, child development, positive guidance and discipline, parent/provider relationships and professionalism. The **advanced training**, offered in a 10 hour series, examines these content areas in more depth. The selection of training topics is responsive to the expressed needs of providers such as help in caring for children with special needs, for infants and toddlers or for school age children. **Training for administrators**, a 15 hour series, responds to the needs of administrators in child care centers and group/family child care homes and covers areas such as personal development and selection, policy development, legal issues, budget issues and record keeping.

Classes are offered in the evenings and/or on weekends to facilitate provider attendance. Trainers from the local/regional 4C agencies adhere to sound adult education practices by ensuring that the learning situation is relevant to real experience and that providers actively participate in all aspects of their learning. Providers are encouraged to seek answers to questions raised by the learning process and to learn from one another. Professionals with certain expertise such as child development, health education or business practices become community partners with the 4C agencies and present at the classes. In this way, providers who attend training, receive high quality information and are linked with community resources. The providers, in turn, can help families to access these resources.

The Michigan Child Care Futures training series are coordinated with existing training opportunities where possible. For example, the advanced training is often offered in the context of local/regional child development conferences sponsored by a collaboration of early childhood leaders. Providers who attend the Michigan Child Care Futures training at the conference have the opportunity to hear the keynote speakers and to interact with other professionals in the field of child care/early childhood education. In many areas of the state, the local/regional 4C agencies have been able to work with community colleges to offer the Michigan Child Care Futures training for college credit. Training is designed to help providers complete formal training requirements for the CDA Direct Assessment Route. Continuing Education Units are available through Michigan State University for all providers who complete the basic and advanced training.

Michigan 4C Association looks forward to continuing the Michigan Child Care Futures Project, to improve services through lessons learned and to continue making linkages with other training organizations to build a strong training/support system for child care providers. Such a system will promote child care as a viable and important career and will have a direct impact on the quality of care that children receive.

MICHIGAN WORTHY WAGE COALITION: CHILD CARE PROFESSIONALS WORKING FOR A CHANGE

*Wendy Shepherd-Bates
Worthy Wage Coalition
Wayne County*

Q. Why did the child care worker cross the road?

A. To get to her second job.

Have you heard that joke before? It's popular in child care circles around the country because of its reality. Whether you are new to the field or have been involved for years, you are aware of the true crisis in child care—the wage and compensation issue. Research proves that quality child care is essential for children whose parents work. There needs to be consistent, trained and qualified staff who can nurture the children while their parents work or attend school, or simply need some time off from parenting. Research also proves that high quality, consistent care is nearly impossible to receive in our country due to the extraordinary turnover of staff because of low pay and poor working environments. It is not unusual for a child care provider to leave after a hard day working with children to go to a second job just to make ends meet.

The Michigan Worthy Wage Coalition is working to change this picture. The MWWC is an affiliate of the National Worthy Wage Coalition, coordinated by the National Center for the Early Childhood Work Force. This is the third year of a five year campaign to bring to public attention the need for higher wages and better compensation for child care workers. The MWWC represents a broad range of child care advocates including providers, directors, work/family coordinators, parents, business men and women, administrators, and others who want to improve the situation and find solutions to the problems.

April 21st this year was National Worthy Wage Day. The MWWC developed an activity which would bring business and community leaders into the discussion of solutions. Nearly twenty leaders participated around the state in the *Child Care Job Shadow Day*, including mayors, a county prosecutor, state senators and representatives, corporate and labor leaders, and a publisher of a major newspaper. By working side-by-side with providers, these people were able to see what quality looks like, and experience the very hard work of caring for children. We are hopeful that they will take this knowledge into consideration when setting priorities related to child care.

What can you do to help change occur? First, take pride in your work. You are a professional who has chosen this work, who has trained for this work, and who—hopefully—enjoys this work. There is no reason why you should not make a living at it. Talk with parents and community leaders about the need for investing in child care. Help parents meet the cost of quality by alerting them to the tax credits available for dependent care. Meet with your local zoning and planning commission to educate them about child care, particularly family-home based care. Open your budget up to staff and parents so that they can see how much of your revenue is invested back into staff. Encourage your legislators to put children as a higher priority. And, of course, join professional organizations, such as home day care associations, your local 4C and Michigan AEYC affiliates, and the MWWC, to learn more about how you can work together with your peers toward worthy wages. Every one of you has something to say that is of value to other professionals. Those of you who are earning a good salary or are paying your staff above average can be leaders in the discussions of seeking solutions.

For more information about joining the Michigan Worthy Wage Coalition, send a stamped, self-addressed business size envelope to: Michigan Worthy Wage Coalition/CDCL, Atten: Wendy Shepherd-Bates, 1420 Spruce Drive, Walled Lake, MI 48390-1543. (Phone: 810-624-3689).



A PARENT'S DREAM OR NIGHTMARE

*Karen Madden, Director
Learn and Grow Child Care
Kent County*

For most people, having their child with them at work would be a dream come true. They wouldn't suffer from those guilty feelings about having to go to work and their job performance wouldn't suffer because they were worried about their children all day. They would have as much togetherness and bonding time as humanly possible. What I have learned the hard way is that "one person's dream is another person's nightmare."

My first lead position in a child care center was in the three-year-old classroom. After I was settled comfortably, I started my daughter Kelli at the center. At that time she was three years old and assigned to my classroom. I thought this would be an ideal situation. Unfortunately, reality dealt a harsh blow! We did not get along from the start. My expectations were too high for her or maybe she really was as active and uncooperative as I thought she was, but either way the end result was a very stressed teacher and an unyielding child. I tend to think that I was harder on her than I should have been. However, as a parent I saw her behavior as a direct result of my parenting skills and my ability as a teacher. When she misbehaved, I was embarrassed, questioned my career choice and my decision to have children at all. Eventually, I was able to enjoy having my daughter at the center. What brought on the change? I moved to the four-year-old group.

While we were in different rooms, we got along fine. We each had our own space and we weren't together 24 hours a day. We could see each other when we needed to and that was enough. The best part was that someone who was not emotionally involved was taking care of her now. That's not to say that I always agreed with the way her teachers disciplined her. After all, she was still my daughter. But I did try to keep my complaints to a minimum. And so all went well... until she got older.

Her following me to the four-year-old classroom was inevitable. And so the problems began again. Not only was she very active, but she was also smart as a whip and she knew how to punch my buttons. The only way we survived that year was for me to let my associate teachers deal with her as much as possible. It wasn't easy for her to separate her mother from her teacher and it wasn't easy for me to do it either. The support and tolerance of the program director was a key factor that enabled all of us to work through those difficult times.

Since those days, I've moved on to other positions. Before each move I gave Kelli a choice of staying where she was or coming with me. Each time she has chosen to come with me. I guess the problems we had were not as traumatic for her as they were for me. In fact, I asked Kelli the other day how she had felt about going to work with me every day. She said, "I always liked being at the center so that I could see you so much during the day. I had lots of fun." Totally astonished, I asked her, "Even when we were having problems?" "Yes, besides we didn't have that many did we?" Leave it to a child to put things into perspective.

IF YOU TAKE YOUR CHILD TO WORK.. .

1. Understand your child cannot distinguish between you as parent and you as teacher. Be prepared for the inevitable conflicts and handle them calmly and consistently.
2. Try distinguishing your feelings as a parent and your feelings of professional competence.
3. Remember that while on duty you are a teacher first. Don't shortchange the other children.
4. Follow the rules of the classroom with your child as you would with any other.
5. If your child is in another room, trust the other caregivers to handle situations appropriately.
6. Build in some private time with your child outside of working hours when she doesn't have to share you with lots of other children.
7. Maintain your sense of humor.

EVERYONE NEEDS A LITTLE T.L.C. A GUIDE TO SUPPORTIVE SUPERVISION

Joanne M. Kelty, Center Director
Kent County

Several years ago I was approached by the facilitator of a local Early Childhood Conference to do a workshop on team building and supportive supervision. In our initial discussion she expressed that my staff always seemed to function well as a team. I told her that I always considered myself "lucky" to have such a wonderful, dedicated, caring staff. She felt as though it may have been more than luck and challenged me to think about what I did as a director to facilitate that team feeling. After a careful analysis, I decided that it was more than luck. It was my brand of T.L.C.

Teamwork

Leadership

Challenge

This brand of T.L.C. is a bit different than the traditional Tender Loving Care, and I hope it may give you some ideas for building and strengthening your staff.

TEAMWORK

There are few jobs more demanding emotionally than working full time with young children. It seems as though someone is always in need. I have found that those folks who are most likely to be able to be nurturing also need nurturing too. Here are some suggestions for "nurturing the nurturers" that I feel build a solid team.

1. Recognize each individual staff members strengths and focus on those strengths. People function the best when they feel their abilities are being maximized. We do this consistently in our work with the children, but often times don't recognize the need for it in our staff. The combined talents of an entire staff far outweigh one person's abilities. If you have a staff member that enjoys writing, invite her to compose the newsletter. If you have someone who has artistic ability, encourage them to do the bulletin boards or any other tasks to improve the appearance of the space. It is too easy to focus on what shortcomings each individual possesses. Instead, I suggest to focus on the positive, and put the ability and energy to work for all the staff.
2. Frequent contact with staff is essential. No matter what size your facility is, make sure that you maintain communication. You want each member of the team to develop ownership and they can't do that if they don't have all the information they

need. I feel that frequent, but not necessarily lengthy staff meetings are essential. Time and salary constraints are often given as excuses, but you must find a way. The support that caregivers can give each other is invaluable to your program. Be sure to provide opportunities for staff to discuss what's not working, but take time in your meetings to discuss what has worked. Once again try to focus on the positive. Contact does not always have to be in the form of a meeting. Supply your staff with feedback on what you have observed. So often we wait until a formal evaluation to give staff feedback. If you witness a great group time activity or notice a staff making progress with a particular child, be sure they know that you've noticed. A quick note in their box or a few words as they pass you will do the trick. Many of us encourage staff to let parents know if a child does something great, and our staff need that feedback too. In order to have children that feel good about themselves and their accomplishments they must witness and then model adults that feel good about what they have accomplished. A teacher must possess self-esteem before she can nurture and promote it in her students. Recognizing what each individual does well and communicating that to them is essential.

3. Provide opportunities for staff to get together on an informal basis. Get your staff out of the center and challenge them to discuss something other than children or parents. Get them to communicate with each other as people who have other interests and activities outside child care.

LEADERSHIP

At the heart of every good team is a good leader. I feel strongly that you can learn what it takes to be a good leader. You need to have the commitment to make your program the best it can be. To be an effective leader you have to be visible. You can't lock yourself up in your office. Staff have to see you comforting a hurt child, changing a diaper, or cleaning up an art mess. Staff will feel more comfortable with advice and guidance if they know you know what it is like to do their job. Whatever the size of the group or whatever the situation, make sure you are visible.

If you are visible, staff will view you as more accessible. Provide regular opportunities to discuss the program on an informal basis. In our center, staff take turns setting up cots and lunch while others have a chance for informal discussion. Whenever possible, utilize those kinds of times to touch base with how individual staff are feeling. Most problems arise from some type of miscommunication. Sometimes a more informal discussion can help alleviate misunderstandings.

EVERYONE NEEDS A LITTLE T.L.C.

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To be an effective leader, staff must view you as their advocate. Staff spend a lot of their time and energy advocating for children, and they need to feel as though there is someone advocating for them. Many centers are part of organizations that have little knowledge of what goes on in a child care center and what being a child care provider is like. Whether it is for better wages or better working conditions, make sure you advocate for your group. You may not be successful in securing better wages or conditions but you will make advances in building a stronger team that knows that you understand their position and want to help.

In a child care setting, I think it is important that the director possess a sense of humor. Using humor is the only way to survive some situations. It helps alleviate the incredible stress that this type of employment brings to everyone. So don't be afraid to laugh a little or be laughed at.

CHALLENGE

The staff in a child care setting go through stages just as the children do. It is essential that you as the program director, feel effective to keep the team cohesive. You may be dealing simultaneously with a new staff member experiencing the frustration of "how will I ever get all this done"; with a seasoned staff member who is on the verge of burnout; and with every stage in between. Teachers need to remain challenged to feel effective and to keep the team cohesive. Providing those challenging opportunities is the director's job. I firmly believe that we always have more to learn. Perhaps the veteran could provide guidance and assistance to the new teacher and thereby develop as a teacher trainer. Or the veteran teacher might give workshops to centers or at conferences. Watch your staff closely and do whatever you can to provide new challenging opportunities for them.

The key to supportive supervision is using the power of the whole group. The director needs to guide this process. I challenge you to provide your own brand of T.L.C. to make your team the best they can be!

As a postscript, with all the things that you do for your staff, make sure you are providing yourself with the connections that give you the support that you need. If it does not exist within your organization, then go to your local 4C or other professional organizations to get yourself support.



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THE TIME IS NOW!

*Pamela R. Baker
Certified Financial Planner
Frankenmuth, MI*

I have been given the opportunity to discuss a very important topic with you, the caregivers. The time is NOW and it is time to NOW CARE for yourself.

As a Retirement Advisor and Certified Financial Planner, I am often asked to speak before groups and I especially enjoy reaching out to women with this message, "Take control of your financial life." I use the "Financial Ten Commandments" to illustrate guidelines to further control. I would like to elaborate on the first of these commandments—

Commandment Number One—Pay Thyself

This guideline is your first step to financial control and independence. As individuals we owe it to ourselves to not only provide for our loved ones, but to ensure our own financial future. No one takes care of you, but you. You are a very important person, be sure to put aside something each paycheck to pay yourself first before all the other bills.

The easiest strategy is through payroll deduction directly into a bank or investment account. Most banks or credit unions enable a business to set up automatic payroll deposits into a savings account. Another alternative is to set up an automatic debit from your checking or savings account each month to invest into a mutual fund or deferred annuity. The key is to make it simple and to not make a decision each paycheck. In other words, if we have the cash in hand, we will find somewhere else to spend it.

Utilize IRAs or a retirement program offered at your work place. The employer sponsored programs also enable you to get a tax deduction as you contribute. Some programs even match a portion of your contributions. If you have your own business, you can start your own employer retirement plan, such as a Simplified Employer Pension Plan (SEPP).

Do not worry about investing big amounts, just get started. Even small amounts can grow if invested wisely. The small amount can be increased each year by the amount of your raise. Whether you are a business owner or an employee the message remains the same—become a saver not a user.

Retirement alone can be the focal point. You are more likely now than ever before to live longer. At age 65, a woman in 1950 lived an average of 15 more years, or age 80. That same woman is projected in the year 2010 to live an average of 21 more years, or to age 86.

The average age of a widow is 56. 80% of all women have no pension plan and half of all marriages end in divorce. Currently, 33% of retirees live just above poverty level. It behooves you to plan for yourself. NOW IS THE TIME! TAKE THAT STEP.

Let time work for you not against you. You can be Tiffany Turtle or Henrietta Hare. Tiffany Turtle made small contributions each paycheck. Henrietta Hare just could not take the time now. Life was too full of other things to do or she needed new shoes this month. We can always find an excuse, but each excuse only generates procrastination and soon it is too late. Time can work for us or against us. You make the choice.

Below is an example of the small and timely contributions of Tiffany Turtle. She placed \$35 each paycheck into an investment meant for her retirement. She did this for 25 years. Henrietta Hare started her race for retirement 15 years later, and put aside \$90 a paycheck for 10 years. Each received an average 8% return a year on their investments and all dividends or interest was reinvested.

Tiffany Turtle:

$\$35 \times 26 \text{ pay periods} = \$910/\text{year}$

At the end of year 25 at 8% annual return her investment = \$72,418

Total amount she contributed = \$22,750

Total amount of compounded earnings = \$49,668

Henrietta Hare:

$\$90 \times 26 \text{ pay periods} = \$2,340/\text{year}$

At the end of year 10 at 8% annual return her investment = \$35,767

Total amount she contributed = - \$23,400

Total amount of compounded earnings = \$12,367



HELPFUL HINTS FOR STRESS REDUCTION

*Hooray For Health Manual
Washtenaw County Health Department*

Your job as a family day care provider is demanding—it requires a lot of responsibility, time, patience and education. Your health as a day care provider is just as important as the health of the children you care for. Take time to take care of yourself—that will help you to better care for others.

STRESS can be any physical, chemical, or emotional factor that causes tension. It is a normal part of life, and can sometimes be helpful. However, when there is too much stress, both physical and mental health can be harmed. **THE KEY IS LEARNING TO MANAGE STRESS!**

HERE ARE SOME THINGS YOU CAN DO TO AVOID OR REDUCE STRESS. . .

- Stay healthy—get plenty of sleep, exercise regularly, and eat nutritious meals.
- Set realistic goals for yourself—learn to say “no” when you feel that you have enough to handle.
- Set and keep policies for children and parents. Establishing some guidelines will help avoid conflicts and it will help your business to be more efficient.
- Build in times for relaxation during your day. Children need to learn how to relax. Some activities can be things you can do together—10 minutes stretching, listening to music, storytelling, or just quiet time.
- Find someone to come in once in a while to entertain the children by reading a story or doing other activities. This will give you some time to “de-stress”.
- Talk about your stress with family, friends, even talking with children you care for can be helpful.
- Take a short break after work and before you jump into activities with your family and others. Use this time to take a walk, a bath, exercise, or whatever you like to do to relax.
- Organize your time. Have written agreements with parents about policies and responsibilities. Keep financial records updated and plan ahead for specific times to grocery shop, do the billing, clean, etc.
- Most importantly—remember to be flexible. No matter how much you plan ahead to avoid or reduce stress, situations will come up that you have to handle effectively. Expect these situations and keep in mind ways to reduce stress. Try to avoid letting stress build up. It's easier to deal with problems before the situation has become too stressful.

DO'S

DO make sure you're “fit” for the job. Exercise, eat and sleep right, and avoid stress!!

DO stay close to your work (don't lift high and away from your body).

DO be sure jobs/tasks are designed to fit the worker.

DO get help if the load is too heavy.

DO get a good grip on what you're lifting.

DO watch your footing. No sudden turns. No slips or falls!!

DO sit in chairs low enough to place both feet on the floor with knees higher than the hips.

DO keep your back straight by being aware of your posture and correcting it. No slouching!!

DO bend with your knees, not your back!!

DO stand with one foot up when standing for long periods of time.

DO get a good night's sleep on a firm mattress.

DON'TS

DON'T stand in one position too long.

DON'T bend over with your legs straight.

DON'T slump when driving or sitting.

DON'T sleep or lounge on soft, sagging, non-supporting mattresses or cushions.

DON'T sleep on your stomach.

DON'T wear high-heeled or platform shoes when standing or walking for long periods of time.

DON'T sit in a chair that's too high or too far away from your work.

BIOMECHANICS OF LIFTING

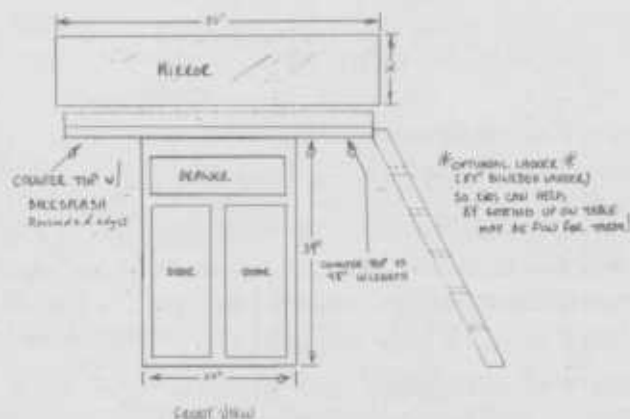
- The worst lifting situation occurs when the body is extended over the load—the lower back becomes a fulcrum supporting the weight of the body plus the load. Twisting in this position invites injury.

How to Lift Properly—Physical Lifting

1. Get a firm footing.
2. Bend your knees.
3. Tighten the stomach muscles.
4. Lift with your legs.
5. Keep the load close.
6. Keep your back upright.

How to Lift Properly—Mental Lifting

1. Size up the load.
2. Get help if needed.
3. Think of a better way or the best way to lift.
4. Check the pathway.
5. Solve high load problems.
6. Solve repetitive problems.



SAVE YOUR BACK

Betty Joe Dunham
Group Home Provider
Kent County

Here is a sketch of my changing table set-up. The cabinet base and counter top are leftovers from our kitchen remodeling project. My husband firmly attached the two main pieces of table together, giving us one whole unit which he then fastened to the wall. He added a trash bag lined wastebasket under one end of the table and a small shelf above the mirror for diapering supplies.

The mattress (which we obtained from a garage sale—where else?) is neatly covered with a clean shower curtain held in place on the sides with duct tape. I think a piece of foam could also be cut to fit the table top.

When my back problem became severe, we attached a bunk bed ladder to one end of the changing table. This allows the 23 to 30 month old diaper-wearer to climb up onto the table and down when diapered. The little ones just love climbing the ladder and it makes me wonder why I didn't do this years ago. Now, if we can just come up with a fun idea for potty training!!

I do hope this will be helpful to other day care providers and perhaps save a few backs.

RESOURCES: CARING FOR THE CAREGIVER

Child Care Information Exchange — P.O. Box 2890, Redmond, WA. 98073-2890, 800-221-2864

Day Care & Early Education — Subscription Dept., Human Sciences Press, Inc., 233 Spring St., NY, NY 10013-1578

Early Childhood Today (including Pre-K today) — P.O. Box 54813, Boulder, CO 80323-4813

Growing Teachers — Elizabeth Jones, editor, National Assn., Education of Young Children, 1509 16th St., N.W., Washington, DC 20036-1426

Hooray for Health — Washtenaw County Health Dept.—555 Towner, Ypsilanti, MI 48198, 313-484-7200

Michigan Worthy Wage Coalition/CDCL, Attn: Wendy Shepherd-Bates, 1420 Spencer Dr., Walled Lake, MI 48390-1543, 810-624-3689

Michigan 4C Association — 2875 Northwind Dr., Suite 200, East Lansing, MI 48823 — 1-800-950-4171

National Association for Family Day Care — Publication and membership information (602) 838-3446, Accreditation (615) 834-7872

National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), 1834 Connecticut Ave., NW, Washington, DC 20009-5786—1-800-424-2460

National Center for Early Childhood Workforce — 733 15th St., N.W., Suite 800, Washington, DC 20005—1-800-U-R-WORTHY

Teachers Coaching Teachers: Development from Within — Patricia Clark Scollan, Child Care Information Exchange. November, 1987

Texas Child Care Quarterly — 4029 Capital of Texas Highway S, Suite 102, Austin, Texas 78704-7920



LATCH-KEY CHILDREN: A NEED FOR THE THREE A'S

Paige Soeltner, M.S.

Northeast Michigan Regional 4C

Lets work together to educate the public, schools, employers, and parents regarding the need for high quality, Adequate, Accessible, and Affordable school-age child care programs.

A group of children which has been gaining recognition for needing care are the school-agers, or children between the ages of 5 and 12 years. Another term that has been connected to this group of kids is "latch key". A latch-key child is one who is home alone before and/or after school while his parents either work or attend school. This group of children has grown tremendously in the last decade which has left many of our communities in a quandary as to whether these children are at risk.

What is the best way to care for these children? Although some may feel that "some place" is better than "no place" for these kids, I believe that a "quality place" is best for all.

In the book *Expanding School-Age Child Care: A Community Action Guide*, which was published by the League of Women Voters Education Fund in 1992, the emphasis for quality programming is stressed. It notes that as providers struggle to "meet the need", quality is often sacrificed.

Indicators of poor quality programs include:

- High child-staff ratios
- Inadequate space
- Little or no staff training
- Lack of stimulating activities

Although these programs may provide some protection to children, they "fail to meet children's needs for positive experiences that reinforce self-esteem and stimulate social and intellectual development.

What can we as a professional community do to support quality programs for school-age children?

- Write letters to state legislators educating them on the need for quality programming for this age group.
- Attend training/workshops that offer information on school-age child care programming and developmentally appropriate practices.
- Maintain high quality standards in your own program. School-age children deserve quality programs.

If you would like further ideas or publications on this topic, contact the League of Women Voters at (202) 429-1965 or call your local 4C office.

**MICHIGAN SCHOOL AGE
CHILD CARE CONFERENCE**

October 25, 1994
8:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.
University of Detroit Mercy
Conference Center

For more information, call
1-800-336-6424

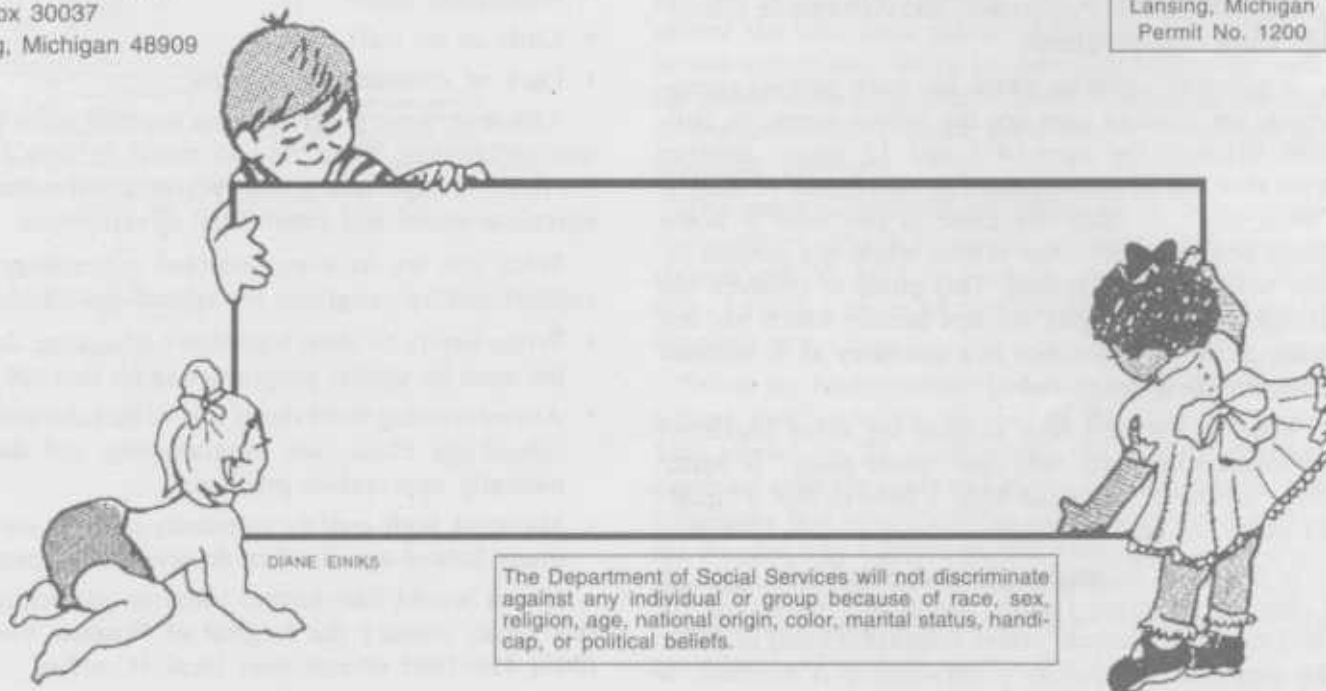
**KARING FOR KIDS:
A BUSINESS CONFERENCE FOR
CHILD CARE PROVIDERS**

September 23-24, 1994
8:15 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.
MSU Management Education Center
Troy, Michigan

For more information, call:
Marilyn Rudzinski
(810) 469-6430

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